

DRAFT
Brunini statement

Many public officials around the country have created blind trusts as an effective way to help avoid actual and potential conflicts of interest between their personal finances and public actions. Governor Barbour's blind trust was created for that purpose. The words "blind trust" are very descriptive. Establishing a blind trust is a highly regarded way to prevent public officials from making decisions with the intent of private gain.

At the time it was created all of the assets in Governor Barbour's blind trust appropriately were deemed to comply with state ethics laws. After its creation the details of Governor Barbour's blind trust are, by design, confidential. Decisions related to asset management are rightfully left to the trust's managers; assets that were placed in the trust may still be in the trust or they may have been sold. Governor Barbour does not have knowledge of what assets the trust holds.

Compliance with all appropriate rules and regulations is a responsibility that rests with the trust's managers and Governor Barbour is confident that's being done.

When Governor Barbour's blind trust was created, it was praised by the media as an ethical, fair way to set aside his business interests while serving as Mississippi's chief executive so there would be no conflict of interest between his private investments and public service. At the same time such a trust would not penalize him for devoting time to public service after a career of business success. Even though a few of those media opinions seem to have changed in the middle of an election year, the original purpose of the blind trust remains the same.